

PARIS

ISTANBUL

STUTTGART



Images from Erdağ Aksel, Aaron Angell, Mariechen Danz, Michael Dean, Cevdet Erek, Nilbar Güreş,
Toril Johannessen, Ahmet Ögüt, Wael Shawky, Slavs and Tatars, Şemailname
Texts from Adnan Yıldız and Dino Dinçer Şirin

KIBLENÜMA

Summer 2013

KIBLENÜMA is a form of publication composed of texts and images from the research and production process of the exhibition project, A History of Inspiration, part of the summer program, Nouvelles Vagues (21/06/2013 - 09/09/2013), of the Palais de Tokyo, Paris. The main references for this project are two images found on the Internet. One is the image of an Ottoman period miniature that is still preserved in a library in Istanbul (Istanbul University, The Library of Rare Works); the other is the image of a computer desktop wallpaper distributed by Microsoft Systems. Through its given title, the publication refers to a third image; an image of an historical object, a compass-like instrument from the Turkish and Islamic Arts Museum. Kiblenüma intends to develop creative directions and critical tools for the discussion of the exhibition.

© All Rights Reserved.

Editing: Adnan Yıldız / Visual Editing: Adnan Yıldız and Fabian Schewe

Research Development and Experimenting with Texts: Adnan Yıldız and

Dino Dinçer Şirin

Translation and Linguistic Experience: Ghost in Translation

Design: Fabian Schewe, Proofreading: Amanda Moore

Cover: Fabian Schewe

Printed in English to be distributed during the exhibition project,

A HISTORY OF INSPIRATION -as part of the Nouvelles Vagues,
Palais de Tokyo, Summer 2013.

Free Limited Edition

10,000 Copies In Print.

AN EXHIBITION PRESENTED AS PART OF **NOUVELLES VAGUES**
PALAIS DE TOKYO

Acknowledgements: Palais de Tokyo, Goethe Institut and The Bibliothèque nationale de France -BnF, (Paris); Künstlerhaus Stuttgart, (Stuttgart); SAHA, RAMPA Istanbul, Galeri Mana, Istanbul University Library and Documentation Center, Boğaziçi University, Bilgi University, and Taraf Newspaper (Istanbul); Supportico Lopez, Tanja Wagner, Kraupa-Tuskany Zeidler, (Berlin); Akinci, (Amsterdam), Herald St. and Rob Tufnell, (London), Angela Staffa (Munich), Sfeir-Semler Gallery, (Beirut / Hamburg); Gallery Martin Janda, (Vienna).

KIBLENÜMA would like to thank: Boris Groys, Orhan Pamuk, Perihan Mağden, Ayşe Kadioğlu, Eve Sussman, Sarah Rifky, Sara Yontan, Yase-men Akçay, Ferah Tuna, Katell Jeffres, Manon Lefort, Marc Bembekoff, Vincent Simon, Sebastien Martins, Frederic Grossi, Agnes Werly, Janine Kersten, Gülseren and Sena Yıldız, Fatma Karasipahi, Didem Yazıcı, Egemen Demirci, Yassin Soumade, and GFS



The chief astronomer Takıyüddin is working with his assistants and colleagues at the Istanbul Observatory House which was founded by the order of Sultan Murad III and served from 1574 to 1581. Reproduced in the manuscript Şemâiname by Seyyid Lokman, Persian text by Alaaddin Mansuri, illustration by Nakkaş Osman [1581] 28x20 cm. (Original: Istanbul University Library T. 1404, Şemâiname V. 57a) Courtesy of Istanbul University Library. Research and Permission to Print: Adnan Yıldız.



Microsoft Windows 8 System Wallpaper (Blue Sky-Grass)



Kiblenüma (Qibla Numā) is an instrument used for finding the azimuth of Kible (Qibla); which means that it shows the angular measurement within a spherical coordinate system in order to locate oneself towards Mecca for praying in the context of Islam.

Kiblenüma, Turkish and Islamic Arts Museum, Fatih, Istanbul. (Archive number: 157 A-B, 31 cm, wood, 1738-39, artist: Barunü'l-Muhter)

Supported by SAHA, Istanbul





Erdağ Aksel

30 cm. Series I-II

1999-2000

mixed media wall installation

Size variable

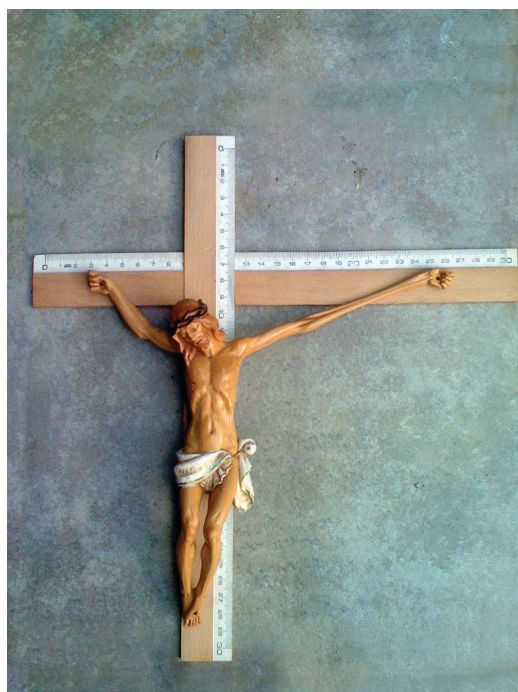
Courtesy of the artist

A HISTORY OF INSPIRATION

BY ADNAN YILDIZ

PROLOGUE: INTENTION

As a research-based curatorial project, "A History of Inspiration" proposes to reconsider the exhibition form as a field survey for investigating conceptual, critical and speculative relationships between curiosity and inspiration. The main references for this project are two images found on the Internet. One is the image of an Ottoman period miniature that is still preserved in a library in Istanbul; the other is the image of a computer desktop wallpaper distributed by Microsoft Systems. The miniature is almost four centuries older than the virtual wallpaper and the disparities as well as the similarities between these diverse physical forms encourage us to question how we measure the life span of historical images as well as the aging of digital images. One reflects the desire to learn about the future, and the other articulates a generic understanding of imaginative thinking.



Erdağ Aksel

Stretch I

2009

THE METHODICAL: SKY AND SCREEN

Running parallel to the production process of the exhibition, the research is better described as an attempt to articulate the conceptual, historical, and epistemological relationships between two areas of the imagination. The sky represents the universal memory of nature, whereas the screen is a reflection of the human mind. This philosophical correlation stems from the miniature, in which the chief astronomer of the Ottoman Empire, Takiyüddin Efendi, is portrayed working with his colleagues and assistants in the Observatory House, which was founded c. 1574 and could only have survived less than a decade in Istanbul. The miniature depicts the *ulema*, i.e. Islamic scientists, academicians and researchers who worked with an advanced level of interdisciplinary cooperation combining mathematics, astrology, biology, poetry and other fields. With the tools and apparatuses of their time such as rulers, clocks and telescopes, they acted on their curiosity and performed experiments, drawing inspiration from nature. From astrology to tarot, mathematics to geometry, geography to science, the sky operates as a ready-made conceptual, material and spatial form.

The research surrounding these reference images has gone through the steps of testing their accessibility, availability and the validity of the information about these images found online. This intense research process has revealed that the miniature was very probably commissioned by Ottoman Sultan Murad III and was most likely illustrated by Nakkaş Osman who is known as the chief illustrator of the various official histories written by Seyyid Lokman, as part of his masterpiece *Şemalname*, in the 16th century. The application process for gaining access to the material and the permission to print from the University of Istanbul was purely a learning process for understanding the internal structure of bureaucracies in the different institutions that oversee contemporary or historical images and their preservation. The National Library in Paris also allowed us to study other relevant manuscripts from their Oriental collection. A limited edition developed from this research process will be distributed in connection with the exhibition installation.

The wallpaper is clearly one of the most publicly shared—and privately owned—images distributed free to the first online computer generation. It has an archetypal quality as a sort of *tabula rasa* or A4 blank paper for a creative mind. The Microsoft wallpaper is a generic image, a sample design produced and distributed worldwide at the dawn of the "Digital Age." The "plasticized" representation of blue sky and green nature was delivered to millions of users as a background for their computer desktops, or extensions of their physical time and space, organized within a virtual reality. Today's visual technologies are based on translating, distributing and editing information via screens, projectors, and monitors, which are becoming smaller and more personal. In most of the designs and structures, the sky maintains its archetypal role as a conceptual base. However, as virtual reality overcomes our physical understanding of space, the instinct to look at the sky persists in the manifestations of the experiments and methodologies used in science and technology. The sky motif always generates curiosity and interest in the future and the unknown; the levels of predictability differ from practical to spiritual; from the question of whether it will rain or not, to the presence or absence of god(s).



Slavs and Tatars

Pray Way

2012

Silk and wool carpet, MDF, steel, neon

390 x 280 x 50 cm

Private Collection
Photo: Bernhard Kahrmann

Mariechen Danz

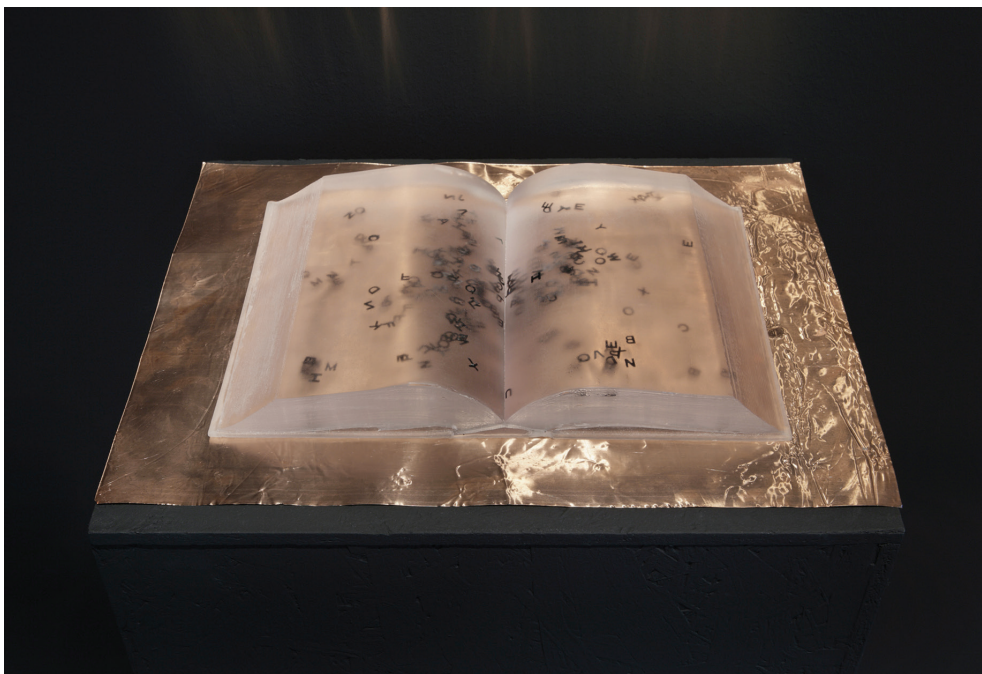
Book 1 (unlearning)

2013

Polyurethane, aluminium, copper

30 x 40 cm

Courtesy of the artist & Galerie Tanja Wagner, Berlin
Photo: Tobias Hübel





Toril Johannessen

Variable Stars
2009

Alum crystal
5 x 5 x 5 cm

Courtesy of the artist

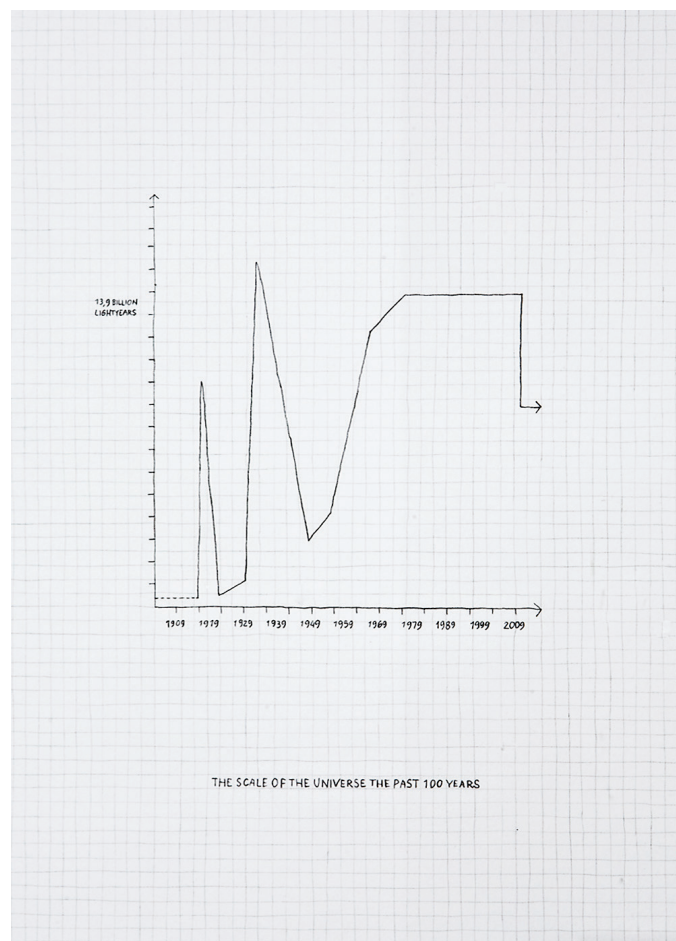
Toril Johannessen

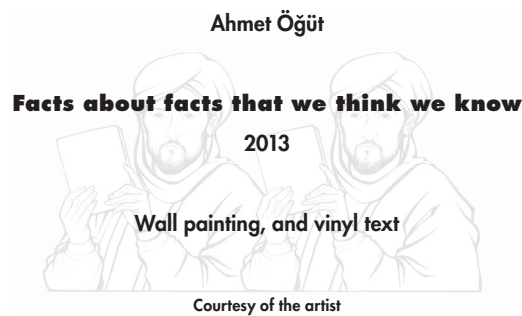
**The scale of the universe
the past 100 years**
2009

pencil drawing
39x29,4cm

THE SCALE OF THE UNIVERSE THE PAST 100 YEARS

Courtesy of the artist





THE GRAMMAR: AS A BOOKMARK

Throughout the process, a referential approach was always present at different levels of the discussion. Reflecting upon post-ideological forms of "curated images" with their over-contextualized references, the research was decisively fixed on these two reference images. With a certain amount of risk-taking, this exhibition limits its references to the two images, aiming to create a critical perspective on how curiosity about the future becomes an abstraction of the history of inspiration. This methodological strategy is inspired by the way in which Boris Groys deals with a historical reference found in literature. In his book *Art Power*, in the chapter about curating, "On the Curatorship," he states that: "To practice art-atheism, would be to understand artworks not as incarnations, but as mere documents, illustrations or significations,"¹ in reference to a Turkish Sultan in Orhan Pamuk's novel, *My Name is Red*. "An illustration that does not complement a story in the end, will become but a false idol," says the Sultan, "Since we cannot possibly believe in the absent story, we will naturally begin to believe in the picture itself.... This would be no different than the worship of idols in the Kaaba that went on before Our Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, had them destroyed... You do understand that, eventually, we would then unthinkingly begin worshipping any picture that is hung on the hall, don't you?"²



... - ... - 1206

Al-Jazari finished his book, the Book of Knowledge of Ingenious Mechanical Devices on ... - ... - 1206. He designed the first programmable humanoid robots.

Al-Jazari (1136-1206) is a Kurdish inventor from Cizra Botan during the Artuqid dynasty, designed and constructed a number of automatic machines, including kitchen appliances, musical automata powered by water, and the first programmable humanoid robot in 1206. Al-Jazari's robot was a boat with four automatic musicians that floated on a lake to entertain guests at royal drinking parties. His mechanism had a programmable drum machine with pegs (cams) that bump into little levers that operate the percussion. The drummer could be made to play different rhythms and different drum patterns by moving the pegs to different locations.

... - ... - 1206

Al-Jazari finished his book, the Book of Knowledge of Ingenious Mechanical Devices on ... - ... - 1206. He designed the first programmable humanoid robots.

Al-Jazari (1136-1206) is an Arab inventor from Jazirat ibn Umar during the Artuqid dynasty, designed and constructed a number of automatic machines, including kitchen appliances, musical automata powered by water, and the first programmable humanoid robot in 1206. Al-Jazari's robot was a boat with four automatic musicians that floated on a lake to entertain guests at royal drinking parties. His mechanism had a programmable drum machine with pegs (cams) that bump into little levers that operate the percussion. The drummer could be made to play different rhythms and different drum patterns by moving the pegs to different locations.



Aaron Angell

**Eternity in D -
Policeman of The Sea**
2013

Glazed stoneware and bottle glass
60 x 56 x 28 cm

Courtesy of the artist, Künstlerhaus Stuttgart
and Rob Tufnell, London
Photo: Fabian Schewe



Aaron Angell

Museum seismograph 1
2013

Glazed stoneware
22 x 36 x 28 cm

Courtesy of the artist, Künstlerhaus Stuttgart
and Rob Tufnell, London
Photo: Fabian Schewe

THE NARRATIVE: CURIOSITY AND INSPIRATION

The research conditions developed from different artistic approaches to diverse contexts. The exhibition process focused on different levels of experimentation: experiments with space, material, and media that have evolved from studio visits, interviews and other working experiences with the participants. The narrative structure of the exhibition stems from parallel discussions with the artists who have responded to the conceptual premise of the exhibition proposal, and have continuously developed sketches for installation solutions. Some works provide diverse linguistic experiences within critical methods of reading and writing in an attempt by the artists to create a vocabulary within their artistic practice. For Berlin-based artist Mariechen Danz, a song is inspiration for further production possibilities. For Danz, writing a song leads to a performance idea which is mostly followed by an installation, which in turn translates the experience of the body into material research and formal language. Her piece *Book 1 (unlearning)* is made of polyurethane, aluminum, and copper through which the audience perceives floating letters through the abstracted form of a book. Relating the meanings of the words to the objects and images through poetry and poetic assemblage, Michael Dean's sculptural and photographic pieces explore the mutual understanding between the distinct positions of author and reader. Concrete sculpture or photographic prints are not only forms of material, but also visual language decisions. *PrayWay by Slavs and Tatars*, a collision of the sacred and the profane—the *rahlé*, the traditional book stand used for holy books and the *takht* or riverbed, vernacular seating areas found in tea salons—, is part installation, part sculpture, part seating area, and all in all, a polemical platform. Berlin/Istanbul-based artist, Ahmet Ögüt, is interested in developing a parallel reading between two images and texts as a response to the exhibition idea. He proposes a form of puzzle in which the audience must reconsider the circulation of knowledge as it refers to another historical figure, Al-Jazari. Different scale collages from New York-based artist, Nilbar Güreş, connect the physical experience of virtual reality through its uncanny territories as painterly gestures. Her series of collages entitled *Black* are composed of strong narratives about personal image, personal space and cyber communication.

Within the exhibition narrative, two practices reproduce the experience of the observatory as a working space and open studio with clear references. Bergen-based Norwegian artist, Toril Johannessen, displays the research-based project *Variable Stars* as a speculation on the historical links between the introduction of photography to astronomy, feminism, and the estimated scale of the universe. The work takes the Harvard College Observatory's great archive of astronomical photographic plates as its very tangible vantage point. Featuring direct copies from this archive as well as telescopes and crystals grown utilizing the photographic material as seeds, the installation ties the ephemeral light from faraway stars with physical matter on earth. Ceramic sculptures from London-based artist, Aaron Angell, relocate us within the exhibition space, playing with our perception of time and sense of history. These glazed pottery pieces not only reflect on the historicity of the material aspect of the work, but also contemporize its perception by looking like remains from a Medieval church or a school that existed at the same time with Takiyüddin's observatory house. Angell produced two ceramic sculptures and a wall piece for this exhibition in relation to the research process of the exhibition; the way he plays with the material, the feeling of history and the perception of past creates an ontological metaphor for what could or would have remained after Takiyüddin's observatory house. The exhibition also includes experimental translations of traditional elements.



Nilbar Güreş
Detail, At Work, 2013

Nilbar Güreş

**At Work, from
the series Black**
2013

Mixed media on
fabric
150 x 250 cm

Courtesy Galerie Rampa,
Istanbul and Gallery
Martin Janda, Vienna



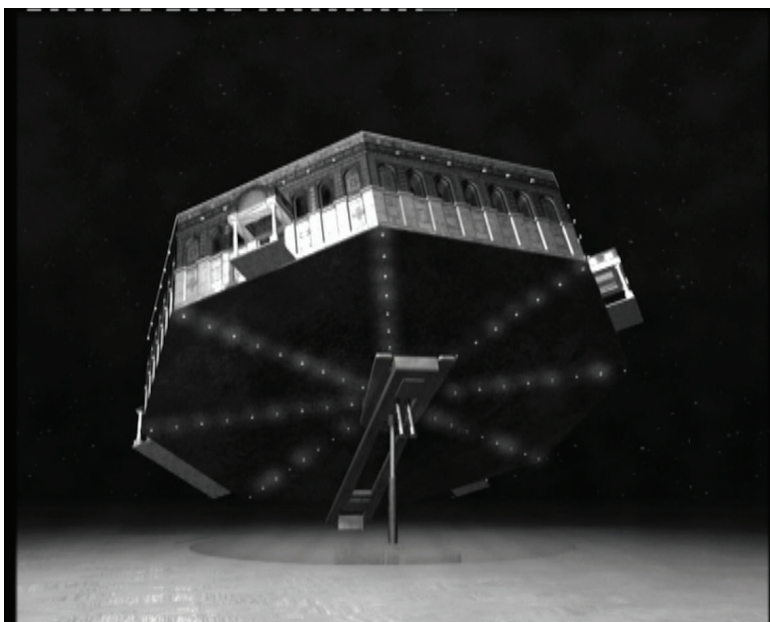
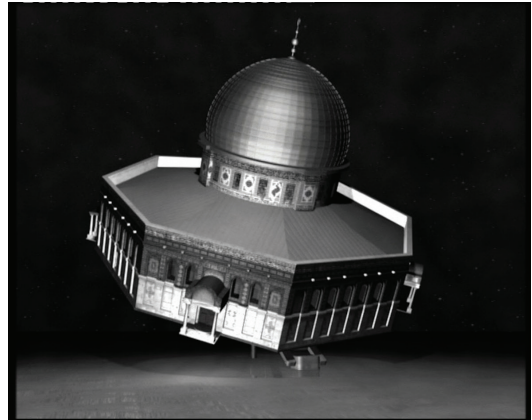


The chief astronomer Takiyüddin is working with his assistants and colleagues at the Istanbul Observatory House which was founded by the order of Sultan Murad



In these works, figures and motifs have been given new form with visual codes relating to the transformation of the historical image from physical reference into conceptual abstraction. In the series *Objects of Hesitation*, Istanbul-based sculptor, Erdağ Aksel, explores diverse forms of indecision referring to the nature of preservation in diverse physical conditions.

According to the artist, the series was born from skepticism "about the merits of decisiveness that preceded the glorification of authority." Jars function to preserve measurement tools and an element of irrationality. Aksel will display a new installation, developed in dialogue with the design decisions of the exhibition room, regarding the wall painted into sky blue. Shown for the first time in 2009, his series "A Calculated Lost of Memory" is composed of standard 30 cm rulers, which are deformed, distorted and transformed into formal gestures. Alexandria based artist, Wael Shawky's computer-aided video work, *Al Aqsa Park* depicts the Dome of the Rock, a shrine located on the Temple Mount (in the Old City of Jerusalem), as a fairground carousel where the histories of the three Abrahamic religions meet. The animated representation of architectural motifs, the movement of the figure in the dark sky and the reference to the controlled environment of the entertainment industry operate at different levels of critical thinking within the context of political systems of religion. Istanbul-based artist, Cevdet Erek, shows his recent piece, *Jingle*, composed of an iPod and wineglasses, which are shaped like bells and were produced in a traditional glass workshop. Shown with these glasses, the iPod loops a sound piece, which provides the audience with a perceptual experience between sound and the objects' image, glasses and bells. According to Erek, what he is interested in developing with his series, "*Rulers and Rhythm Studies*" is based on several layers: "Firstly, I am interested in creating simple interfaces, which are based on a very familiar tool—the ruler—from everyday life, which may or shall help the viewer or user or owner to envision temporal relations."



Wael Shawky
Al Aqsa Park
 2006
 Video animation, sound, 30 min
 Video still
 Courtesy the artist and Sfeir-Semler Gallery,
 Beirut / Hamburg



Michael Dean

ha ha ha ha ha ha ha (Working Title)
anlogue series (tongue)
 2013

Concrete, glue
 41 x 33 x 23 cm

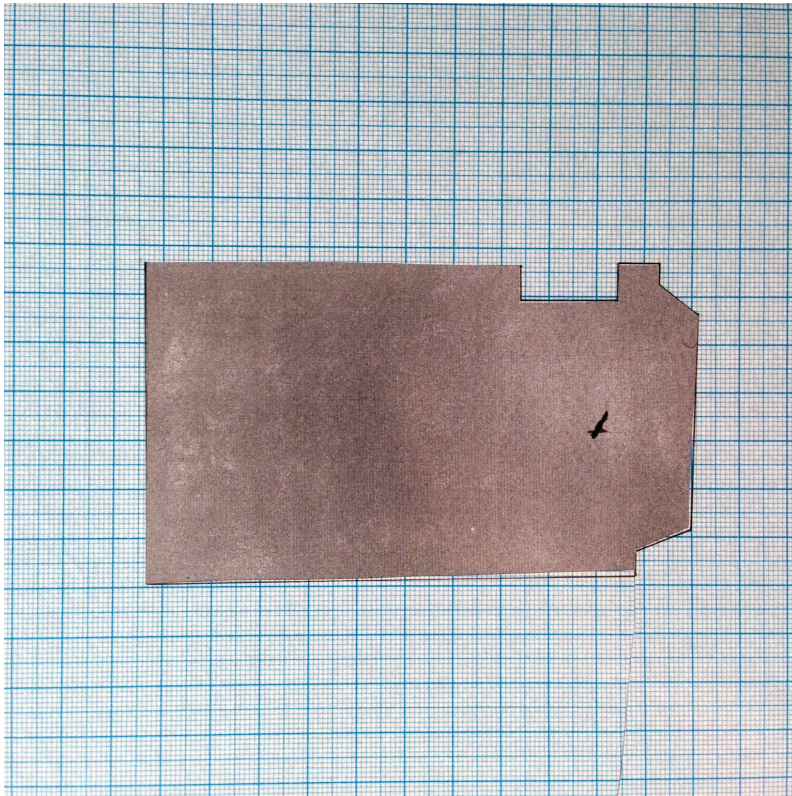
Private Collection

Michael Dean

Untitled (our daily permanence)
 2009

Courtesy Herald St. and Supportico Lopez





Cevdet Erek

**Sketch for Sky Ornamentation
with 3 Sounding Dots and
Anti-Pigeon Net**

2010 (detail)

Xerox, graph paper, glass

20,5 x 29 cm

Commissioned by Thyssen-Bornemisza Art
Contemporary (Vienna) & VKV (Istanbul)
Courtesy of the artist

Cevdet Erek

Jingle

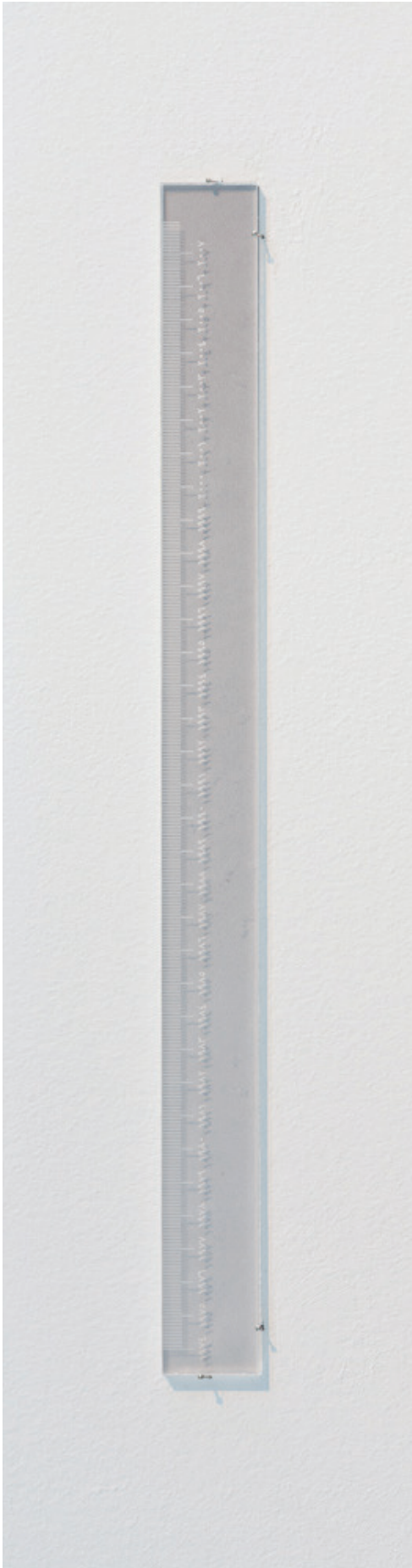
2012

Glass, sound, iPod, ayran, text

Dimensions variable

Courtesy of the artist, Akinci Gallery,
Amsterdam and Galeri Mana, Istanbul





Cevdet Erek

Ruler 1 (Cairo)

2007

Laser on transparent plexiglas
3 x 36 x 0.5 cm.

Courtesy of the artist and Akinci Gallery, Amsterdam

THE PARADOXICAL: LIFE OF AN EXHIBITION

As a cognitive experience for the audience, this exhibition brings together selected works, focusing on social learning and different levels of interpretation and critical thinking. How curiosity shapes innovative thinking, research and the learning process can be linked to the role of inspiration in artistic production. The exhibition attempts to inspire the audience to look at the sky with methodical questioning and to recognize how screens control image circulation and its economy. Every exhibition is limited by its conditions, resources and situation, but there is always a wide space left for the imagination of the audience. In this case, the critical gap between the miniature and the desktop wallpaper will continue transforming itself in our conceptual thinking with the potential for further contribution—long after the physical reality of this exhibition disappears.

¹ Boris Groys, *Art Power* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2008), 48.

² Orhan Pamuk, *My Name is Red* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 2001), 109.

ON ASTRONAUTS LANDING IN THE RUINS OF HISTORY

BY DINO DINÇER ŞİRİN

"We have not put much emphasis on putting astronauts into space to the moon and things like that, but they are sending unmanned probes, and they are gathering an amazing amount of images and showing us these images. And I think that's affecting the psychology much differently than seeing two astronauts splash down in the ocean after coming from space... I think it's setting the platform for us to use our imagination to imagine what Titan is like, or... Well, we don't even have to imagine now, because we have the landscapes of these planets... so we're learning, and so I think that over time probably our fantasies will become beyond what we know, what we can learn, but actually outside of our galaxy, the binary black holes, and the nebulae and things like that, and we'll begin to..."

Jeff Mills in conversation with Derek Walmsley, *The Wire* #300

It was a time when Full Moon in Sagittarius revealed that all secrets embody new challenges and when one understood that he should have stopped resisting change. When I began this text, it was another astrological period: Cancer's planet Moon squares Saturn. It brings insecurities from the past, which is a basis for Cancer. Saturn is hence an emotional spatiality in which melancholy is experienced. This is the reason why Walter Benjamin, whose sun horoscope is the same as mine, Cancer, chose Saturn for his own. As a counter view, Theodor Adorno takes astrology as an example of irrational thinking¹. Benjamin implies his own melancholic aura in the following excerpt, "I came into the world under the sign of Saturn - the star of the slowest revolution, the planet of detours and delays..."² Here, Jameson quotes from Benjamin, relating Saturn to "apathetic, indecisive" qualities and "slow" as a quality of time, which enables a connection to one's spirit.³

Saturn makes you disoriented. Disoriented from where you stand. It presents you with some emotional particularities in order to deconstruct all you know about orientation and comfort. Benjamin argues in "A Berlin Chronicle" (1932) that getting lost, a state of being preceded by disorientation, is a level to pass. While getting disoriented, one creates an "imaginary map" which provides a way for one to locate himself. Getting lost is a lesson one is taught, but it is never easy to learn since "to lose one's way in a city, as one loses one's way in a forest, requires practice."⁴ Here, *History of Inspiration*, a research process on transforming ideas and experiences into physical possibilities that was initiated as a question by Adnan Yıldız, remained an experimental research while I was wandering around these issues of disorientation, re-mapping and getting lost in writings of Taqi al-Din Muhammad ibn Ma'ruf

al-Shami al-Asad (Takuyiddin) and in founding exhibition forms from exhibition history. This process includes my own experience of losing my way between three libraries, Bilgi University Library in Eyüp, Boğaziçi University Library in Rumelihisarı and The Library of Rare Works in Beyazıt, where I took a look at the copied manuscripts written in Ottoman language that I could not read today, authored by Takuyiddin, an Ottoman astronomer (1526–1585). While the idea of the exhibition was accumulating its own contents and creating its own space in Paris, my aim was to create my own architecture in the conceptualization of *History of Inspiration*.

What makes my own experience melancholic here is determined by my singular way of remembering things. And reflecting on the mundane details of Istanbul can cause one to feel deprivation for no reason... As an emotional response to our loss, melancholia is what follows us along the way. In other words, the melancholia of the discourse of historicism that Istanbul is based on means "too many possibilities", it also comes "from not noticing one's lack of practical sense".⁵ The melancholic subject constructs itself within what is lost, never relinquishing its attachment to the loss, as it functions as nourishment. As Anne Anlin Cheng summarizes "melancholia does not simply denote a condition of grief but is rather, a legislation of grief"⁶ Moreover, it is more about our obsession with a loss whose origin is not visible to us.

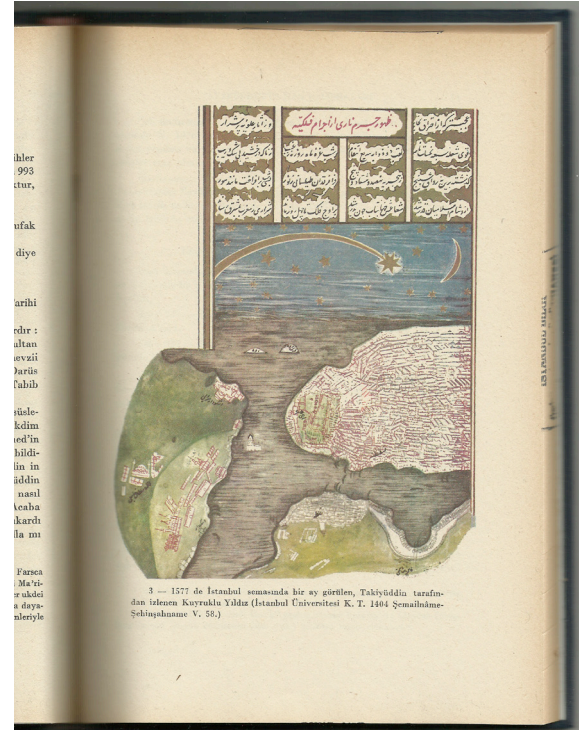
Apart from the contextual construction of the exhibition, what remains with me after having wandered between these three libraries was a possibility to notice the moments of legitimization of scientific knowledge, which were already considered to be in decline.⁷ Stopping by such points as Eyüp, Rumelihisarı and Beyazıt, all very crucial locations in Ottoman History, triggered a search to find the meaning of inspiration today and, in turn, to reflect on the problematic of the contemporary context of inspiration in exhibition making in curatorial memory. What I was concerned about was the question of how to move in an imaginary form of exhibition through the writings I could never understand or barely understood. In a time wherein we all feel the historical bounds of what we speak, how possible is it to mark the coordinates of inspiration? In a time in which the uniqueness of not only artistic production, but also of exhibition making are broken and become "ruins", how possible is it to describe the melancholy of what makes an exhibition within the history of exhibitions? The tension between the inspired one and the inspiring one that is based on a certain degree of power relations creates a space for audienc-

es to experience the potentiality of melancholy. And the other question that emerges here is, how could this potentiality be extended to include my findings along my way to the history of inspiration, which is a search with no end. Even if I had questions in my pocket, I never put a scientific emphasis on the research and always followed my instincts that brought me to the discoveries I randomly encountered, which fed the content of the exhibition.

Susan Sontag mentions a picture of Walter Benjamin, taken in 1937, that shows him in Bibliothèque nationale de France in Paris.⁸ I was mesmerized by this detail, as the first moment I felt myself getting lost in the research and realized that I was captivated by the research on something/somewhere/sometime I have never been, was when I discovered that one of Takuyiddin's manuscripts is conserved in Bibliothèque nationale de France in Paris. Moreover, Sontag, who also argues that Benjamin sees ideas and experiences as "ruins" depicts meaning in Benjamin in the following that "[t]o understand something is to understand its topography, to know how to chart it. And to know how to get lost."⁹ Hence, my own experience with History of Inspiration, as a non-participant-non-observant researcher investigating the possibilities of an exhibition creating for itself and converting it into a spatial structure, focuses on a fragmented memory that talks "of a space, of moments and discontinuities".¹⁰ It was inevitable to be interested in translating the discontinuities into a mental-spatial potential as "[i]n time, one is only what one is: what one has always been. In space, one can be another person".¹¹ Though History of Inspiration seems to be an exhibition underlining the notion of time through giving a historical panorama of astronomy and astrology, it rather concentrates on space strategies I also contributed to.

Sontag chases one of her inspirational figures, Benjamin. While she calls back the times in history that are not belonging to her, she gets closer to me who got lost in the manuscripts. Here, Sontag, Benjamin and me become interconnected. As she talks about Benjamin as a collector, she addresses his collection of books of every kind and points out that his books never existed alone but they were present with the rooms that had their own memories. The same way Takiyuddin's manuscripts left me alone among the memory of shelved books. This research, or my experiment, of getting lost was not only a research on Takiyuddin's own world he created and enriched with his inventions on astronomy, it was also a research about how to move among the "ruins" of histori-

cal knowledge. My choreography in this research including "intersections, passages, detours, U-turns, dead ends, one-way streets"¹² was an endeavor to create a mental architecture, which has resulted in the effect of Saturn and ended up as a form of exhibition. Everything could be historically determined, yet inspiration is always a drive to move on as, "one is always nearer by not keeping still."¹³



This page is scanned from the book, "İstanbul Rasathanesi" (Istanbul Observatory House printed by Türk Tarih Kurumu, second edition, 1985) written by Ahmet Süheyl Ünver including the legendary story of the comet, which was clearly observed almost a month in Istanbul during 1577 referring to the notes of Takiyüddin and another miniature from Şemâinâme. (Image credit: İstanbul Uni. K.T. 1404 Şemâinâme-Şehinşahname V. 58.)

¹ Theodor Adorno, *The Stars Down to Earth*, (New York: Routledge, 2002).

² Frederic Jameson, "Walter Benjamin; or, Nostalgia", in *Marxism and Form: Twentieth Century Dialectical Theories of Literature*, (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1974), p. 70

³ Frederic Jameson, "Walter Benjamin; or, Nostalgia", in *Marxism and Form: Twentieth Century Dialectical Theories of Literature*, (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1974), p. 70

⁴ Walter Benjamin, "A Berlin Chronicle", in *One Way Street and Other Writings*, (London: New Left Books, 1979), p. 298

⁵ Susan Sontag, "Under the Sign of Saturn", in *Under the Sign of Saturn*, (New York: Picador USA, 2002), p. 114.

⁶ Anne Anlin Cheng, "The Melancholy of Race", in *The Melancholy of Race: Psychoanalysis, Assimilation and Hidden Grief*, (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), p.8

⁷ Jean-Francois Lyotard, "Delegitimation" in *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), pp. 37 - 41

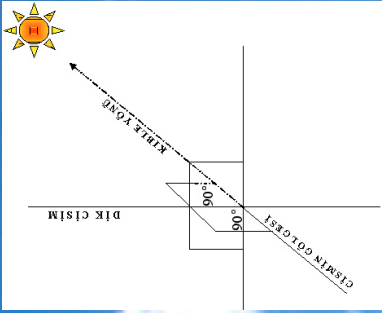
⁸ Sontag, *Saturn*, 110 ⁹ Sontag, *Saturn*, 116 ¹⁰ Sontag, *Saturn*, 115

¹¹ Sontag, *Saturn*, 116 ¹² Sontag, *Saturn*, 117

¹³ Thom Gunn, "On the Move", in *Collected Poems*, (London: Faber and Faber, 1994), p. 39 - 41



An anonymous illustration of Takiyüddin's portrait.



Kible for Qibla, Qiblah, Kiblah)



Mariechen Danz Studio, Berlin. Photo: Adnan Yıldız



No Comment!



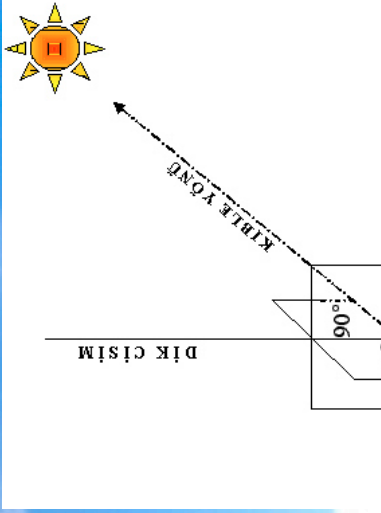
Palais de Tokyo, Paris. Photo Adnan Yıldız



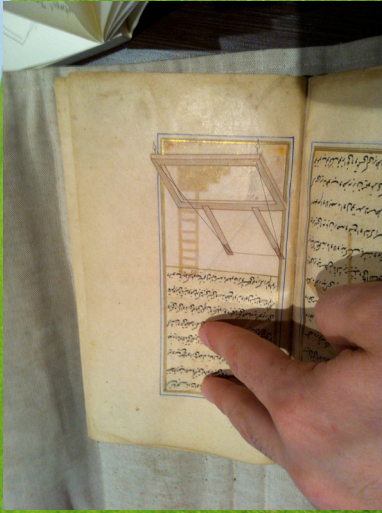
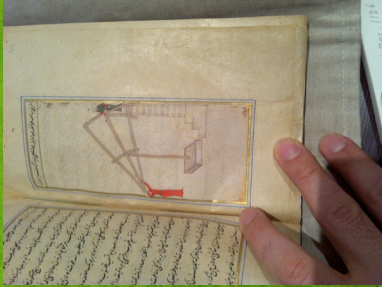
The library of Rare Works, Istanbul University. Photo: Adnan Yıldız



Bibliothèque nationale de France. Photo Adnan Yıldız



Aaron Angell was at Künstlerhaus Stuttgart with his "Art Pottery" during spring 2013



An hour spent with a manuscript at the Bibliothèque Nationale, [Manuscript Orientale, Supplement Turc, No. 1126]



Minyatürde çatının altındaki kartuşlarda yazılan Farsça beyitler ve Türkçe karşılıkları

Zeyeksû rasadhâne-i muhtasar
Nümûdend nezdikiye ân makarr

Derû panzdeh ehl-i ilm-i güzîn
Şudend ez-peyi hidmet-i Takî-dîn

Pes ângeh be-terşîd her yek ezân
Be-şod penc tâ fâzıl-ı nüktedân

Bir taraftan küçük bir rasathane
Yaptılar o merkezin yanında

On beş bilgin¹⁵ orada çalışmaya başladı
Hizmetinde olmak için Takiyüddin'in

Ardından gözleme başladı her biri
Beşi daha uzman oldu



**And thus they built a small observatory
Next to that centre**

**Fifteen scientists started working there
Just to be of service to Takiyuddin**

**Then each one of them started observing
Five of them became experts**

GLOCALLY AWAKE

05.06.2013

by Adnan Yıldız

I am occupying this space in order to write about the recent anti-government protests in Turkey. Exhibitions aim to challenge the way in which we look at the world and so does life itself. Ten days ago, it all started with the excessive use of police force and tear gas against the Gezi Park occupation in Istanbul's Taksim Square. The police brutally attacked the demonstrators and burned their tents. The photos and updates coming from the demonstrators were clearly documenting the unprecedented cruelty against those who were trying to develop creative tools and peaceful strategies to deal with the demolition of the park such as reading books, camping, etc. The Turkish press was completely blind and mute; the repressive government denied the seriousness of the facts. Thousands of people united to react against this state violence, and the uprising has spread through many cities demanding freedom of speech, resignation of the government and putting an end to the excessive use of tear gas by the police as well as plastic bullets, tanks, tear gas dropping helicopters and physical violence. As far as we know 3 people were killed, many people have been injured and arrested by the police.

This is neither an Arab Spring against the militarist monarchy, nor is it the Occupy Movement protesting an inequality of % 99 versus 1. It is a combination of many things. In order run an opinionated discussion, we need to consider some recent historical facts.

The vice president of AKP (Justice and Development Party) Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu told Christiane Amanpour of CNN that there is no plan to build a shopping mall on the site of the Gezi Park, where thousands of people are united to protect the trees. Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan suddenly began to talk about the construction of a museum and an opera house with a reference to his dream of many years about the reconstruction of the old military barracks in Taksim Square.

When the entry to such 'public spaces' is restricted, limited and controlled by the neo-liberal transformation and gentrification process, one wonders if there is any difference between a shopping mall and a museum today? The repressive voice of the government has not only declared total control over the public space, but has also increased restrictions on different lifestyle choices and violated freedom of speech. Little space was left for diversity, and many people were judged on the basis of moralist conservatism and references to traditional Turkish-Islamic values.

Towards the end of 2011, 34 civilians of Kurdish origin and Turkish citizenship were killed during the Uludere Airstrike in the South Anatolian border. Out of nowhere, Turkey suddenly started to discuss an abortion ban. A populist approach of playing with the Turkish words for "Kurdish" and "Abortion" (Kürt and Kürtaj) was brought to the table to shift the political agenda of the country. This spring began with the government's attempt to make peace with the Kurdish resistance organization, PKK. This process was not communicated clearly with the opposition or the public, creating question marks in people's minds. For some, it was seen as a sort of compromise for Erdoğan to run as president in a new model that he proposed. After the recent bombing near the Syrian border in Reyhanli, that caused the loss of more than fifty people, Turkish media was not allowed to cover the news for a while and a couple of days later, the government put forward laws restricting the sale and the consumption of alcohol. In addition, his party's proposal to name the 3rd Bridge after Yavuz Sultan Selim, the Ottoman sultan who is known for the persecution of Alevis, received lots of public critique— not to mention other self-centered decisions. One might ask a crucial question: What went wrong within this moderate form of Islamic modernity in Turkey, which had been presented as a model for the entire Middle East?

The prime minister of Turkey was democratically elected three times. He increased his votes, promising solidarity even with those who did not vote for him. His government tripled the national income and sidelined the militarist state tradition towards a democratic transformation with the support of many liberals and left wing intellectuals who, until recently, backed him up. Following the mistaken Uludere Airstrike against Kurdish civilians, his attitude started to change. Some critics explained it as The Deep State in Turkey taking over his ideals, and absorbing his soul. In these recent days of occupations of city squares, one of the biggest failures of the government was to define the protestors as

marginal groups and extremists. Many of young people changed their nicknames on social media to, "çapulcu," or "marginal," as the prime minister called them. In reality these were mostly young protestors with no engagement in any political party. They have simply been experiencing solidarity, physicality and political consciousness. According to the prime minister, Twitter was a troublemaker and he reminded the public of the fifty percent vote that his party got during the last election, as well as the rule of majority.

It is not only about a park anymore. Whatever it is operates as a point of inspiration. The demonstrators say that they feel much better now that they have turned off their TVs and that the communication amongst them is becoming more creative as it is about moving together in time and space. They are ironically thankful to the government that united them. So, it is not just a park anymore. It is about a young generation of people, who were never given a chance to express themselves except through social media networks, left with the sole option of self-reflection as virtual communication. A generation who never had any hopes in terms of making changes or being part of the decision making process. They don't want to get glued to LCD screens, but aim to look at the sky in a free world! At this time it appears that none of the opposition's political parties or provocateurs achieved their goals in terms of mobilizing this occupation towards their agendas. Nationalist Kemalists tried hard to do that and patriots defended the police and their actions. However, their arguments are weak and not convincing enough. The day after Saturday's big crack down, many of the protestors went back to the park to clean up the mess, plant flowers and set up libraries. The images from the Gezi Park Occupy displays a utopian form of self-organization, reminding me of another park story; the long term resistance of the demonstrators from Stuttgart against the erection of the new train station (Stuttgart 21) that I witnessed during the last years. The trees were also cut down and the police force was very cruel. Now it appears as if the Stuttgarters have lost the battle against the politicians however, the deficit for the construction of the new station increases more and more, plus the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) recently lost the election against the Green Party for the first time since 1972. The city is still covered with stickers and signs for the K21 (Kein (No) Stuttgart 21) resistance movement.

Could this be a bridge between the Arab Spring, the Occupy movement and European democracies, which were all materialized and consumed by the international press and left to their destiny as negotiations between power structures?

Erdoğan came to power through democratic choice and represented the people who were oppressed during the harsh years of Turkish modernity. By creating another elite class and re-capitalizing the city of Istanbul, considering the city as the number one investment tip in the global hot real estate market, he now quarrels with his own bread and butter. This situation cannot be isolated from what is going on in the rest of the world: It is simply that people who are not represented in the current political systems, have no voice in the media and no decision in the transformation of public space, react through coming together. Erdoğan or Merkel, it is still about the isolated form of authority and power structures that close their channels to their own public. I am afraid it is still mainly about the class struggle.

And dear reader,

What you see below in the links, videos and photos are evidence of a new era. An awakening of our glocal reality. It is not only happening in Istanbul, in Turkey. It is happening everywhere right now.

Links:

<http://occupygezi.com/>
<http://www.direngeziparki.com/>
<http://showdiscontent.com/> (A wevll-organized visual diary)
<http://www.narphotos.net/> (Photographers in charge)
<http://Instagram.com/ahmetogut> (Ask the artist to add you to his list to see his Istanbul tour)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=59XPBtofVGA> (The Gezi Park occupy In 7 minutes)
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cMyXlyWbfxQ> (No, It is not Hollywood!)

41°02'18"N 28°59'13"E